



Michael F. Easley

Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.

Secretary, DENR

# LAKE EXHIBITS NEARLY COMPLETE

By CHARLIE PEEK  
Public Information Officer

With just a bit of luck, a new exhibit hall will be dedicated in early January at Lake Waccamaw State Park.

The project is the first of its kind in the area of the bay lakes parks. Biologically, Lake Waccamaw is the most unique of the state's shallow bay lakes with a near-perfect pH balance that fosters unusual plant and animal species, and that is the principal message of the roomful of exhibits.

"It's very colorful with a lot of interactive exhibits, a lot of things for kids to play with," said Siobhan O'Neal, exhibits coordinator. "Of all the projects I've worked on, this one probably has the most fun exhibits."

The hall offers one mini-theater with a 12-minute video examining the lake's biological systems and its cultural history. The wooden seating recalls the



*PARK SUPERINTENDENT ERIC DOUSHARM WITH NEW EXHIBITS THAT EXPLAIN THE BIOLOGY AND HISTORY OF LAKE WACCAMAW.*

early pier structures common when the lake was a popular tourist destination. Another mini-theater resembles a giant mussel, and its video examines the role of that critter in the lake's ecosystem.

A cultural history section recounts the days when loggers floated rafts of cypress across the lake and the tourism efforts

that soon followed. These were pioneered by Sam Potts, an entrepreneur who developed much of the lake's shore with the help of scenic boat tours. Park Superintendent Eric Dousharm said that John McNeil Sr., a local pharmacist and amateur historian, offered his trove of old photographs of

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 2*



Department of Environment and Natural Resources

the lake and of Potts.

O'Neal said, "It was once quite a tourist destination. It used to be THE place to go – to hang out at the lake. There were a lot of public beaches then."

Dousharm said that the exhibits package also includes a mini-laboratory with microscopes and a wooden plank boat holding a map of the lake that will be a centerpiece of the

visitor's center lobby.

The park's advisory committee has scheduled a dedication Jan. 5. That will be a close fit since most of the electronic components have yet to be installed, he said.

Division staffers began planning for the exhibit hall soon after the park's new visitor's center was completed in 1999. Although most of the text was prepared early under

the guidance of Tom Howard, interpretation and education specialist for the district, problems with the original design/build contract delayed work for many months.

Much of the design was eventually completed by O'Neal, and the exhibits were built by Design Dimension, a specialty contractor based in Raleigh.

Construction cost about \$170,000, funded through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Dousharm said that Southeast Community College, with its programs in environmental science, forestry and ranger technology, plans to make frequent use of the visitor's center and exhibit hall, and that the exhibits should rekindle interest in the park in the local community.

## UP CLOSE AND PERSONNEL

*Vickie D. Zubiato* is the new office assistant at William B. Umstead State Park. She is a graduate of Ocean Spring High School in Ocean Spring, NC. She comes to the division from DNA Group, Inc.

### From The Director's Desk

Dear fellow employees,

If you spend much time talking about Christmas and the holiday season to parents and grandparents, you'll usually end up hearing tales of Christmases in the leaner times of the past. The stories of finding nothing in the old stocking but an orange and few pieces of candy come readily to mind for people of that generation.

Well folks, a few years from now, we may be reminiscing the same way about this holiday season in state government. It's been a lean year, no doubt about it; and at the same time, each of us has an extra long list for Santa.

But like those earlier generations, we as a division have endured through the strength of being part of a large and resourceful family. Tough times are made a bit easier when we can lean on each other, and because of common experience, even find a few things to make us smile. That spirit of family is one of the things I'm most grateful for in this season.

Here's hoping that you and your own families have the most joyous of holiday seasons.

Sincerely,

**Phil**

Philip K. McKnelly

## ALWAYS. . .

**LOOKING FOR  
SUBMISSIONS --  
PHOTOS AND STO-  
RIES -- FOR THE  
STEWARD. LET US  
KNOW WHAT'S  
HAPPENING IN  
YOUR PARK.**



# AERIAL LIFT EXTENDS PARKS' REACH

Maintenance mechanics and rangers in the north district have a longer reach now with the addition of a 50-foot aerial lift to their arsenal of tools.

Personnel from the district received training on the new piece of machinery in early November at Falls Lake State Recreation Area.

Jerry Howerton, district maintenance mechanic who arranged the \$30,000 purchase, said that the lift has been on the district's "wish list" for many years. "We've been needing it. These guys have been trying to do their work off extension ladders and sometimes it just doesn't work so well," he said.

Besides its utility for trimming trees and brush and for painting chores, the lift can double as a crane with a 500-pound capacity, Howerton said, making it useful for repairing well pumps for example.

The lift offers a 50-foot vertical reach and a 30-foot lateral reach with room for two people on the lift platform. It's powered by an 11-horsepower Honda engine and offers automatic leveling.

Its slim profile – about six feet wide and 20 feet long – allows it access to most areas of a park. It can be towed behind a standard pickup truck.

Its first job, Howerton said, will be to help repair about 30 wooden light standards in the parking lots of Falls Lake. William B. Umstead



*DISTRICT STAFF GETS TRAINING ON NEW AERIAL LIFT.*

State Park also has a keen interest in the lift since staffers there have found more than 150 dying tree limbs hanging in the vicinity of the park's campground, prompting staff to close the campground.



## NATIVE AMERICAN WEEK

*STUDENTS DANCE AROUND TOTEM POLES AT THE 'HOMELIFE' STATION AT PETTIGREW STATE PARK DURING ITS ANNUAL NATIVE AMERICAN WEEK. MORE THAN 1,000 STUDENTS FROM AN EIGHT-COUNTY REGION LEARNED ABOUT LAKE PHELPS' EARLIEST SETTLERS DURING THE EVENT.*

# PARKS STAFFERS AID HAY TRANSPORT

At the request of the governor, state parks staff teamed with other state agencies to haul hay to farmers across the state affected by this year's drought.

This summer, the US Department of Agriculture declared 73 North Carolina counties agricultural disaster areas because of the drought. In these counties, farmers have not been able to produce the hay they need to feed livestock.

"Pastures have dried up, hay production in these areas has been severely affected, a number of farmers are already having to sell livestock or buy hay to feed their animals, and available hay supplies are rapidly dwindling," said Meg Scott Phipps, the state's agriculture commissioner, in a June press release.

Many of these farmers traditionally grow their own hay to support their livestock, but now must buy hay from other areas of the state, and they are unequipped to transport hay to their farms. To assist, Governor Mike Easley issued an executive order that temporarily waives width restrictions on vehicles transporting hay to farmers in the drought stricken counties and requested state agencies with large vehicles and trailers to assist in the hay hauling effort.

"If we were not doing what we're doing, then we would see a significant number of farms go out of business. And, the bottom line is many of the farms would not be active again," said Joe Reardon, coordinator of the hay transportation effort at the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

"For these farmers it's a lifeline," Reardon said. "Several of the farmers have commented that they're graciously thankful



*DIVISION TRUCKS LINE UP FOR A HAY TRANSPORTATION CONVOY.*

for the help state parks is giving. Without the assistance of state parks, many of the farmers would have had to liquidate their livestock."

Division staffers began hauling hay in late October. By the end of November, the division transported approximately 400 bales. Bales are typically four feet by four feet and weigh about 700 pounds. Pickups have been made as far east as Columbus County and deliveries as far west as Haywood County.

"I think it's important for us to assist when requested in a way that represents our division well," said Susan Tillotson, north district superintendent.

Tillotson coordinated shipping schedules with the division's eight drivers and their district superintendents. Alan Alligood, a maintenance mechanic at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park, also coordinated major runs during the effort's first weeks and was one of the division's drivers.

Eight maintenance mechanics with Class I commercial drivers licenses have been transporting the hay using division dump trucks and trailers that are typically used to move large equipment such as

backhoes. The division purchased nylon strapping to secure the bales. Money for the straps, fuel, meals and hotels has come from division funds.

"We just made do with what we had," Tillotson said. "As it always is when something like this comes along, it's a group effort."

Tillotson added that none of the effort would have been possible if not for the help of Terah Councilman, the division's budget administrator, who secured travel advances for food and for hotel rooms on extended trips.

Other state agencies transporting hay to farmers include the NC Department of Correction, the NC Division of Emergency Management in the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, the NC Division of Forest Resources in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the NC Food Distribution Division in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The last time park staff was directed to assist agencies outside its jurisdiction was during the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. The Division of Emergency Management called in park staff to assist with law enforcement.



# NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT

PARK					% CHANGE (2001/2002)	
	OCTOBER 2002	TOTAL YTD. OCT. 2002	OCTOBER 2001	TOTAL YTD OCT. 2001	OCT.	YTD
CAROLINA BEACH	19,406	215,293	21,589	231,160	-10%	-7%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	10,010	127,834	11,027	121,438	-9%	5%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	22,074	251,666	33,379	252,627	-34%	0%
ENO RIVER	24,027	264,708	26,989	278,208	-11%	-5%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	3,129	29,722	2,922	31,009	7%	-4%
FALLS LAKE	48,731	973,481	63,125	1,090,078	-23%	-11%
FORT FISHER	60,534	933,395	58,880	599,660	3%	56%
FORT MACON	85,298	1,205,682	93,878	1,154,566	-9%	4%
GOOSE CREEK	9,936	121,024	9,053	100,631	10%	20%
GORGES	13,925	143,776	8,291	87,614	68%	64%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	17,100	170,308	16,653	177,691	3%	-4%
HANGING ROCK	29,461	355,309	41,276	370,448	-29%	-4%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	71,829	918,495	63,925	930,709	12%	-1%
JONES LAKE	7,246	96,300	5,988	108,098	21%	-11%
JORDAN LAKE	153,182	1,502,940	65,088	1,144,848	135%	31%
KERR LAKE	68,508	1,496,888	90,580	1,333,376	-24%	12%
LAKE JAMES	10,171	238,900	9,913	225,067	3%	6%
LAKE NORMAN	29,694	340,799	24,474	228,558	21%	49%
LAKE WACCAMAW	6,140	91,740	6,120	93,294	0%	-2%
LUMBER RIVER	6,475	47,170	5,215	45,281	24%	4%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	7,004	64,279	7,232	61,951	-3%	4%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	7,768	80,933	7,494	74,555	4%	9%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	34,740	375,060	46,660	450,200	-26%	-17%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	11,727	87,730	11,861	82,289	-1%	7%
MOUNT MITCHELL	85,226	521,921	111,026	510,719	-23%	2%
NEW RIVER	19,652	143,769	11,792	119,572	67%	20%
PETTIGREW	6,347	72,921	5,858	80,250	8%	-9%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	37,380	338,576	55,694	379,276	-33%	-11%
RAVEN ROCK	8,381	98,148	10,323	103,838	-19%	-5%
SINGLETARY LAKE	480	15,079	1,444	11,930	-67%	26%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	15,576	145,825	15,738	165,572	-1%	-12%
STONE MOUNTAIN	45,929	414,080	65,068	453,262	-29%	-9%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	2,601	24,394	2,891	22,795	-10%	7%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD		316,915	35,559	342,563	-100%	-7%
<b>SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>979,687</b>	<b>12,225,060</b>	<b>1,047,005</b>	<b>11,463,133</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>7%</b>

# LAND ADDED TO ENO RIVER PARK

The division has finalized the purchase of 159 acres adjoining Eno River State Park and negotiations are in late stages for adding an additional 800 acres.

Taken together, the two tracts would represent the park's largest acquisition since its founding about 30 years ago.

The 159-acre tract from the estate of Margaret Coile lies in a curve of the river north-east of the US 70 and Interstate 85 interchange in eastern Orange County and has been under significant development pressure, said Sue Regier of the natural resources program.

"It won't be the quietest part of the park. You won't feel like you're in the middle of nowhere," Regier said, but the purchase gives the park an important buffer from the highways.

The property is covered in hardwood and pine forest and includes about 7,000 feet of river frontage, north-facing bluffs featuring mountain laurel and rhododendron and a portion of the river floodplain. About 4,000 feet of Nancy Rhodes Creek, an Eno tributary, also runs through the tract.

The property is just west of the park's Cabe Lands, and park officials will be walking the area in coming months to look for potential backpacking campsites and possible trail routes to link the two areas, Regier said.

The land purchase includes three houses, two of which may be used for ranger residences.

The division is seeking grants from the

*"THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST  
EXCITING ACQUISITIONS FOR THE  
STATE PARK IN SEVERAL YEARS."*

-- DON MOFFITT  
ENO RIVER ASSOCIATION

Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund to help match a grant from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. The purchase price is about \$1.1 million.

Susan Tillotson, North District Superintendent, said that the Eno River Association offered significant help during negotiations for the property. "There were times when it was not entirely certain that we would be able to pull this off," she said. "And each time, the Eno River Association stepped up and helped us. We particularly appreciate them for taking the risk of guaranteeing a penalty payment should we have been unable to close on the property."

Don Moffitt, president of the Eno River Association, said, "This is one of the most exciting acquisitions for the state park in several years. Land in Durham and Orange counties is getting more expensive every day and it's getting harder and harder to find these undisturbed areas."

The association also recently bought two tracts of riverfront property near Dimmock's Mill Road and St. Mary's Road, protecting more than 16 acres from development.

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## Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:



to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

*and*

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

*The Steward*

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